

# Press release: The challenges and opportunities for Welsh tourism post EU exit

From dolphin spotting trips along the Ceredigion coastline to adrenaline fuelled mountain bike experiences, UK Government ministers will hear first-hand the crucial contribution the Mid Wales tourism industry brings to the Welsh economy during a visit to Aberystwyth today (26 July).

Supporting Wales' thriving tourism sector will top the agenda at a roundtable meeting hosted by Wales Office Minister Guto Bebb MP and UK Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism John Glen MP at Aberystwyth University.

This is the latest in a series of meetings hosted by the UK Government in Wales as Britain prepares to leave the European Union.

The Ministers will gather tourism experts and businesses from across Wales to discuss the opportunities for growing the industry, and to hear their views on ensuring a tourism sector that thrives and develops post Brexit.

Tourism is big business in Wales. In the 12 months ending March 2017, there were 104.6 million day visits to Wales, with an associated spend of £4,346 million.

More than 1 million international visits were made to Wales in 2016 – up 11% on the previous year – which was worth almost £450 million to the economy.

## **UK Government in Wales Minister Guto Bebb said:**

Whilst I already know a lot of the great places to visit in Wales, I always welcome the opportunity to speak to people working in the industry, to hear about the issues they are facing, and opportunities available to them

As we move towards our exit from the European Union, the job of listening and engaging has become even more critical

The UK Government's overriding goal is to make sure that the voices of all sectors from all corners of the UK are heard. That is why we are bringing experts from Wales' tourism sector together for this meeting in Aberystwyth today. We want to give them the platform to discuss the challenges posed by Brexit, but also to hear the great opportunities for growth in business and employment

Wales is regularly highlighted as one of the best places to visit in the world. We are determined not just that it remains so but that we make it even more attractive post EU departure.

## **Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism John Glen said:**

Promoting Wales as a must-visit destination and ensuring that all parts of the UK benefit from international tourism is a key government priority. We want visitors from across the world to experience all Wales has to offer from its rich culture and history to its thriving city centres and breathtaking scenery.

International tourism was worth almost £450 million to Wales last year and I want to help the industry grow this number further. Leaving the EU presents opportunities for the tourism sector, and it has been great to hear directly from Welsh businesses on how we can make the most of them to ensure all parts of the UK benefit.

During the visit to Aberystwyth, both Ministers will also mark the £10.5million Heritage Lottery Investment in the restoration of Old College and Mr Bebb will also visit Aberystwyth University's Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS)

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## **[News story: Round pound left in slow lane as new £1 coin overtakes in circulation](#)**

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury is today (26 July 2017) visiting a coin storage facility in Belfast, where more than £350,000 worth of coins are processed and redistributed daily, to banks and businesses across Northern Ireland.

Speaking on reaching the changeover point between the old and new pound coins, the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Andrew Jones MP said:

To have more new coins in circulation than old at this point is great news and I'm pleased to see progress on this in Belfast's Coin Store today.

However, with less than 100 days to go, the clock is ticking. We are urging the public to spend, bank or donate their old pound coins and asking businesses who are yet to do so, to update their systems before the old coin ceases to be legal tender.

CEO and Deputy Master of The Royal Mint, Adam Lawrence, said:

The Royal Mint is very proud to have delivered the new 12-sided £1 pound coin and ensuring a smooth transition is now our top priority. We hope our announcement about the changeover point in July will encourage those businesses who have not yet upgraded their equipment to do so ahead of the October 15 deadline.

The new 12-sided £1 coin was brought in to tackle the rise of counterfeit coins, which cost businesses and the taxpayers across the UK millions of pounds every year. With less than 3 months to go before the round pound loses legal tender status, it is vital that the public continue to return their old pound coins.

Businesses are also being encouraged to get ready. The government is reminding all those who are yet to prepare for the new 12-sided £1 coin to do so now by upgrading equipment and informing customers.

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## [Press release: Government announces additional support for social care providers](#)

The government today (26 July 2017) announced it has temporarily suspended enforcement activity and is waiving historic financial penalties against employers concerning sleep-in shift pay in the social care sector.

Ministers have worked closely with the sector in response to concerns over the combined impact which financial penalties and arrears of wages could have on the stability and long-term viability of providers.

The [exceptional measures](#) announced today are intended to minimise disruption to the sector by recognising these unique pressures, and ensuring that workers receive wages they are owed.

Social care providers play a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our society and workers in that sector should be paid fairly for the important work they do. The government remains equally committed to making sure workers in this sector receive the minimum wage they are legally entitled to, including historic arrears.

The long-term stability and success of the social care sector is a priority and the government has already allocated an extra £2 billion of funding to the sector, including an extra £1 billion this year.

The government will continue to look at this issue extremely carefully alongside industry representatives to see whether any further support is

needed and ensure that action taken to protect workers is fair and proportionate, while seeing how it might be possible to minimise any impact on social care provision.

The government today announced it will:

- waive historic financial penalties owed by employers who have underpaid their workers for overnight sleep-in shifts before 26 July 2017
- temporarily suspend HMRC enforcement activity concerning payment of sleep-in shifts by social care providers until 2 October 2017

Government reaffirmed its expectation that all employers pay their workers according to the law, including for sleep-in shifts, as set out in guidance entitled '[Calculating the National Minimum Wage](#)'.

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## **Speech: After generations of hostility, blood & tears & in the wake of years of pain & wars, we are determined to bring an end to the bloodshed & sorrow**

Thank you Mr President and let me join others in thanking you Nikolay for your briefing and for your tireless efforts on this issue.

As you have set out so clearly this morning, the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories continues to be of utmost concern for the Security Council. After generations of hostility, blood and tears and in the wake of years of pain and wars, we are determined to bring an end to the bloodshed and sorrow.

But such determination is not new, Mr President. In fact, those words I just uttered come from the Washington Declaration, signed on this very day twenty three years ago.

That historic document started a process that created a historic peace between Israel and Jordan; a peace that would have been unthinkable decades before. The symbolism of this particular anniversary should not be lost on anyone in this Council today. It should remind us all that the peace we seek is not impossible; no matter how far off it may appear; no matter the challenges ahead.

It is a reminder of hope that the region desperately needs. One need only look to the recent abhorrent surge in violence to see that peace remains far

from the minds of far too many.

I condemn the horrific terrorist attack that claimed the lives of three Israelis during a Shabbat dinner last Friday. I deplore the tragic murder of two Israeli policemen at the Temple Mount/Haram Sharif the Friday before.

A spiral of tension and violence has swept across the West Bank and Jerusalem in recent days. I am deeply concerned about the loss of life, including the deaths of at least four Palestinians, and deplore the violence that has left hundreds injured in clashes over the weekend. The relevant authorities must swiftly investigate all these incidents.

We call on all parties to show restraint and restore calm. We call on all parties to avoid provocation and, through engagement, to reach a solution that ensures the safety and security of the Temple Mount/Haram Sharif; one that upholds the status quo. We welcome the engagement between all parties to find a solution, and we welcome positive steps taken overnight. This is the path to de-escalation. This is the path all parties must take.

In parallel, Mr President, we must not lose sight of other challenges to peace, such as the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, where the recent cut in electricity supplies is exacerbating already perilous conditions; over 33,000 people displaced, insufficient clean water to meet the population's needs, with most only getting water for a few hours every 3 to 5 days.

Over 70% of Gazans are now reliant on UNRWA and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the UN for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of those in Gaza.

Ultimately, it is Hamas' decision to choose violence and reject the Quartet Principles that lies at the heart of the tragedy in Gaza. There is a way out; Hamas must renounce violence, recognise Israel and accept previously signed agreements. This means an end to the rockets, an end to the violence. Those countries in the region with influence over Hamas must encourage them to take these steps.

We also need to see steps towards the restoration of the Palestinian Authority control of Gaza and with it, the restoration of effective and accountable governance. If we are to achieve a solution, Israel must lift restrictions on Gaza to ease the suffering of ordinary Palestinians. The UK stands ready to do all we can to support these efforts.

Beyond Gaza, we're also concerned to see settlement activity in East Jerusalem increasing, especially at a time of heightened tension. All settlements are illegal under international law and I strongly condemn plans to build new settlement housing units. Many of these units are within Palestinian neighbourhoods and some involve the demolition of Palestinian homes. This is unacceptable. I'm also gravely concerned by proposals for the construction of a further 1,100 units between the West Bank settlements of Adam and Neve Ya'akov. Settlements undermine the territorial contiguity of the West Bank and make a two-state solution harder to achieve.

So there is a great deal for us to do, Mr President, if we are to make peace a reality. But before I give up the floor, let me return to the Washington Declaration. While the process begun on this day in 1994 would lead to peace between Israel and Jordan, we should never forget the leadership shown by the United States that was so instrumental in making that peace possible.

And it is that same leadership that President Trump and his administration are now demonstrating in reinvigorating the Middle East Peace Process. This is to be applauded and supported. We call on the region, on Israelis, and on Palestinians to seize the opportunity that such leadership offers, just as it was seized 23 years ago.

Thank you.

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## [Press release: UK troops awarded medals for UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan](#)

85 UK troops from the Engineering and Medical Taskforce in South Sudan have been awarded UN medals by HM Ambassador Alison Blackburne in recognition of their unstinting service in South Sudan.

During their tour, the troops have undertaken projects including support of remedial works to a jetty on the River Nile and helicopter landing sites, flood prevention and other infrastructure improvements, as well as the construction of a temporary field hospital in Bentiu. The field hospital will provide medical care for 1,800 UN personnel, and will be staffed by UK military clinicians for the next 12 months. This will enable other military and civilian staff to carry out the work of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), a challenging operating environment.

Speaking to the medal recipients, HM Ambassador Alison Blackburne said:

It is not only about what you have achieved, but also the way you have achieved it. You have conducted yourselves with incredible professionalism in a collaborative and humble manner. It is an honour to present you with such well-deserved medals.

The UNMISS medal which has been presented to troops from Op TRENTON 2 in Juba, South Sudan. Crown copyright.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Jason Ainley has now handed over command to Lieutenant Colonel Katie Hislop, who will continue the valuable

work of the UK taskforce. Medical staff will continue to provide high class healthcare whilst the Engineering troops now turn to building the permanent hospital, as well as to UN infrastructure tasks including improving supply routes. This work will enable UNMISS to continue to protect civilians in one of the world's most fragile nations.

Following a commitment made in 2015 by the then Prime Minister to double the UK's commitment to global peacekeeping initiatives, nearly 400 UK military personnel are supporting UN efforts in South Sudan, making this one of the UK's largest operational deployments in the world.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Jason Ainley said:

It has been an immensely rewarding and humbling deployment. We have achieved far more than anticipated in January. The UK Engineering Taskforce and Medics are now firmly established in UNMISS and we are honoured to be able to receive our hard-earned UN medals from HM Ambassador.